

MURESPOLOGIA:

O R,

THE ART OF THE APOTHECARY, &c.

MUREPSOLOGIA ;
OR,
THE ART OF THE APOTHECARY,
TRACED UP TO ITS ORIGINAL SOURCE IN HISTORY ;
AND
THE ANTIQUITY AND CONSEQUENCE
OF THE
DRUGGISTS AND DRUG MERCHANTS
ASSERTED AND MAINTAINED AGAINST THE
MISREPRESENTATIONS OF THE AUTHOR OF A
LATE HISTORY OF MEDICINE.
THE NATURE AND DESIGN OF THAT PUBLICATION
EXAMINED,
AND
THE TRUE FOUNDATION OF THE RESPECTABLE
CHARACTER
OF THE
APOTHECARY OF GREAT BRITAIN,
AT THE PRESENT TIME,
POINTED OUT AND ILLUSTRATED,

BY JOSEPH BRADNEY, ESQ.

" DIFFICILE AUTEM EST, CUM OMNIBUS PRÆSTARE
" CONCUPIERIS, SERVARE JUSTITIAM, QUÆ MAXIME
" EST PROPRIA." CICERO,

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MUREPSOLOGIA;

O R,

THE ART OF THE APOTHECARY, &c.

REFORM is a word of fair promise, but, like liberty, has been much abused.

It has been well observed, that to gain credit with mankind, and cover its own deformity, vice itself is compelled to pay the compliment to virtue of wearing her mantle.

In all addresses, therefore, where reform is the recommendation, it is highly incumbent on the parties addressed, to guard against deception.

The best characters in society are most generally assailed in this way, because the sanction of a good name is desirable to warrant the design of the assuming reformer, and give strength and currency to his project.

The perusal of a publication of this nature, on the subject of pharmacy, gave rise to these observations, in which the respectable names of Wilberforce, and Dolben, are introduced, with a view to engage those eminent characters to patronize and promote the undertaking and design of the author. An enquiry, therefore; into *the necessity of the undertaking*, and the nature of the design, it is hoped will appear at once seasonable and useful.

But since reform is the professed object of this little volume, a preliminary remark or two may not be improper.

Reform then should be proposed from purity of intention, and perfect disinterestedness, or it will be subject to strong suspicion, as proceeding from illiberal motives. It is true, that if the reality is proved, the motives are of no moment; but they most certainly will have their influence when the scheme is presented for notice, and generate some warrantable prejudice during its investigation.

Decency in expression, modesty of sentiment, strict adherence to truth, and an avoidance of the mean and petty act of exalting himself by a detraction of others. These surely should be manifested in a composition tending to recom-

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mend new modes, and new measures, as means to obtain the desired end of reform.

This being premised, let us then take into consideration the necessity of the author's undertaking.

It might be imagined, that the powers which already exist in the corporate bodies, who legally preside over the department of pharmacy, were annulled, or of no force; because, if these powers exist, and are lodged in the hands of gentlemen perfectly competent to exercise them, and, if these powers are not only very full and comprehensive, but exercised with prudence and discretion, we are led to judge, that any change of men or measures, must be equally unnecessary and absurd. For even admitting the present administration of them not to produce the full effect expected by the new reformer, how would the matter be mended by transferring such enlarged powers to a description of men who are not supposed, from their education and knowledge, to have their minds adequately enlarged to use them with propriety?

If the College of Physicians, for instance, and the experienced Committees of the Company of Apothecaries, were to waive their chartered privilege of examination and jurisdiction,

and making their congé, were to deliver over their powers to a self-erected body of consequential men, protruding themselves on the public without the passport of any degree or open probation whatsoever, the exchange could not be warranted on any principle of reason or prudence, much less of necessity. On this part of the argument, therefore, the author seems very tender, keeping it in the back ground, as much out of sight as may be, choosing rather to rest his necessity of reform upon his favourite topic, the increase and ignorance of a mushroom race of modern druggists. Hence he derives consequence to himself, and triumphs in the antiquity of his order. If he has no better plea for superiority, he would have acted with more wisdom to have declined the part of advocate to the respectable body of apothecaries, a society—*non tali egens auxilio, nec defensoribus istis*—for supposing the estimation in which the order was held, in the most ancient of times, was to give consequence in the present day, why not refer to the records of the earliest periods of history? Alas! modern reformers, and modern philosophers, have little to do with the legislature of Moses, or the customs of the Hebrews. If in his etymological researches the author had thought proper to consult the

writings of that venerable law-giver, he would have found the definition of the apothecary universally to be, the mere compounder of oils, ointments, salves, and lotions. The word apothecary, in the Septuagint, is, *Mυρτος---scilicet qui coquit seu conficit unguenta*—He would have seen described the Stacte, Onycha, Galbanum, as part of the materials of his profession, retained by him for use in his apotheca, his repositorium, or shop.

This definition of the art of the apothecary, is to be met with repeatedly in the sacred writings, every where to the same tendency, except in the Prophet Nehemiah, where the word *παχημ*, in the Septuagint, translated apothecary, is different from every other passage, and ought undoubtedly to have been rendered medicus, or physician (in the sense we now understand the term) as derived from *πωνυματ---sc. sanitatem confirmare & robolare*—especially as it is here meant to describe a person of very high eminence among the Jews, whose son Hananel was chosen and deputed with Uzziel, the goldsmith, upon a business of the first importance to the state. This term, therefore, must be allowed to express something superior to the trade of the apothecary, whom we find correspondently in Cicero, stiled, *unguentarius*; the *Mυρτος*, of

Greeks ; and his occupation ranked, *inter artes sordidas*, whilst *mercatura multa undique apportans*, & *medicina quâ prudentia inest & utilitas quæritur*, are classed by him *inter artes honestas*. These apothecaries of ancient days were not *medici*, but *unguentarii*. The *seplasia**, according to Pliny, was the shop or business of the retailer of plaisters and ointments. The *pharmacopola* was a vender of drugs by profession ; as a prescriber not attended to, except as a quack or mountebank : thus Cato writes—*Pharmacopole verba audiuntur, verum ei se nemo committit, si æger est.*

Pharmaceuta is a term applying equally to sorcery, charms and witchcraft, as to the dispensation of medicine. Virgil's Bucolic, under this title, refers to the former interpretation of the word : it is with propriety, therefore, that the College of Physicians, in their edicts, reject it, using generally the terms *pharmacopola* and *pharmacopœus* ; the one denoting the traffic in drugs, the other their preparation, the vender, and the compounder.

As to the fourth term, *pharmacotriba*, surely no one would choose it as the characteristic of

* Credunt seplasise (speaking of physicians) omnia fraudibus corrumpentii—jauæ quidem facta emplastra & collyria mercantur.—Plin. lib. 34. c. 11.

his profession, since it can only refer to the pestle and the mill, pounding and grinding.

Let us now turn to that modern description of men termed druggists. The author vaunts over these puise interlopers: but has he reason? We see he styles them a novel race, unknown to former ages; and that he is very elaborate in his endeavours to prove his assertion. Here to he is equally unhappy: for inasmuch as the raw material is produced before the manufactured, so the exercise of the druggists' branch of commerce must precede that of the compounder.

It is matter of surprize to find him so shallow upon this part of his subject.

The term drug, in commerce, says Chambers, is a general name for all spices used in medicine, dying, and the mechanic arts. Now, the traffic in spices was of great antiquity, extent, and moment. We read—from the same authority it is a pride to quote, of a great diversity of species; of calamus and cassia; of myrrh, aloës and cassia; of balm and myrrh; of aloës and cinnamon; of frankincense, spike-nard, camphor and saffron. Yet our author has the boldness, I had almost said effrontery, to assert that drug merchants were unknown to the ancient world. But let him rather confess,

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with every unprejudiced person, that these spices, or drugs, (as now they are called) were procured by the sagacity and industry of the merchants in drugs, or spices, of that period of time which the history refers to. Their antiquity, which rises as high as the biography of Joseph in Genesis, is not more apparent than their actual consequence, credit, and importance. We read of their camels richly laden, that bore spices in great store and abundance : and again, of the camels in the train of the Queen of Sheba bearing rich presents of spices to Solomon. Is there need of further quotation ? Surely enough has been adduced to satisfy him that the merchant in drugs is a character of great antiquity and consequence, and much above the low occupation of the apothecary of the early ages.

If then their antiquity is proved by the foregoing observations, all the argument against it, drawn from the paucity of diseases of former times, and the consequent trifling consumption of drugs, (so that a vender of them could not live by his profession) must sink and vanish. On his own ground, however, the author appears not well supported ; for it admits of much doubt whether the diseases of antiquity were fewer in number than at present. Our chief know-

knowledge of the subject is derived from a warm climate, where the air is generally not so favourable to health, and particularly in those parts which are inundated at stated seasons. The putrefactive exhalations contaminating the atmosphere, and generating pestilential disorders, must at least produce a greater increase of sickness, if not an increase of discriminative diseases.

But if we take into the account the passions of men, and their moral disorders, heightened by the warm temperature of the climate in these eastern regions, and consider further how small is the proportion and degree of natural evil, when compared with moral, together with the great improvements which in later ages have been made in medical practice and economy, we have some reason to conclude that the catalogue of diseases in those countries was as full and copious as that of the present day in our own.

True it is, that David, the Hebrew King, described, if he did not actually suffer under some of those diseases which our author asserts cannot be traced with certainty in any of the Greek and Roman writers. The thirty-eighth psalm, if taken literally, will furnish the proof. Bishop Patrick, indeed, chooses to paraphrase it

it allegorically, allowing, at the same time, that it is generally thought to be a literal description of David's sickness; but then, he adds, that this is not so certain as appears at first sight. Yet the confession in the fifth verse, that his foul and loathsome disorder was the consequence of his own folly, makes the literal acceptation much more natural and easy than the allusive and allegorical.

Without pressing this argument, we may at a certainty refer to two of the disorders quoted, the scurvy and *rachitis*, which are acknowledged by medical men of the first abilities to be of the highest antiquity.

After all that has been urged, the merits of the argument, for the necessity of the author's undertaking, rest neither on the comparative antiquity of the parties, nor on their consequence in the early ages.

The whole section, therefore, in the volume under examination, which is drawn out historically, may perhaps deserve well, if viewed as the academic thesis of a young student handed up his tutor; but when considered as an introductory practical vehicle to usher in his proofs of the necessity of the undertaking to reform, by degrading one class of men to elevate another, the whole of it appears irrelevant, and
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not perfectly liberal. Nor should we have followed the author in this track, but to clear away his prefatory absurdities, and the misrepresentation manifest throughout.

Be the characters of these classes of men what they may, the necessity of reform must be argued from some other cause.

The powers which exist are known by reference to the statutes to be ample. These are lodged in the hands of a most respectable and skilful body of men. Their use and exercise, therefore, are only to be adverted to; and this question resolved, how it happens that such extensive powers, so judiciously placed, should fail of the success expected? This is imputable to two special causes; the nature of the subject, and the mutability of opinion.

The author insists on the necessity of public examination, and the test of comparative and individual ability.

For the first, it is enough to refer to the established rule and practice of the College of Physicians, and the Company of Apothecaries. Such public test and examination is required in each, as is considered satisfactory to warrant admission to practise. It is not expected that

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the test of the medical acquirements of the apothecary should be so strict, or rise so high as that of the physician. Neither does it. Nothing more clearly shews the subordinate rank of the apothecary, (as such) in regard to medical estimation, consequence, and respect, than this difference in examination, as well as of preparatory education between the physician and himself. And hence it was, that the impropriety of change was before noticed, if gentlemen of this limited education and knowledge should be substituted in the place of the present constituted legal authorities.

As to the test of comparative and individual ability, public opinion will ever fix its acceptance; the discerning few, its true value and estimation.

The probationary examinations being once passed, the man who has thus acquitted himself well, becomes entitled to general respect. Whether one man is really superior in talent, literature, or genius to another, is the enquiry more of the schools than of the world.

Eminence of public character does not always follow eminence of ability. Knowledge of mankind frequently supersedes professional knowledge. Comparative estimate must therefore be left as it is, since the public will form their

their own judgment, too often the reverse of the founder decision of the schools. *

Having said so much on examination and on persons the objects of it, we come now to notice the matters, which are the subjects of it, or things to be examined, these are drugs and medicines.

Omitting therefore all strictures on practice, we turn our attention to the nature of these, their preparation and sale. The excellence of drugs and medicines is two-fold, intrinsic, and extrinsic ; the former affecting practice, the latter the sale. Hence arises the necessity of great discretion in the exercise of his powers by the examiner.

The searcher, for instance, enquires for some drug. It is produced, it is surveyed, it is found to be discoloured by age, its characteristic beauty is gone, thus its extrinsic excellence is diminished or lost, but at the same time the prudent examiner discovers enough to allow that its intrinsic excellence or virtue has suffered nothing : that it is good to all the operation of medicine, as if taken fresh from the earth or newly stripped from the stem.

Should an imprudent man in office go to the extent of his powers, he might reject the drug,

* Non est consilium in vulgo, non ratio, non discrimin—
ex opinione plurima, ex veritate pauca judicat.—Cicero.

and enter a minute of censure against the proprietor.

A compound medicine stands nearly in the same predicament. An artful knave may compound a spurious medicine with such nicety, as to defy detection, while a less skilful but honest compounder may be scrupulously exact in the materials of his composition, but slovenly in its preparation.

The one will, at first sight, appear to deserve reproof, the other commendation ; but should the searchers proceed with rigour, the *summum jus*, would be, *summa injuria* ; difficulties of this nature continually occur. Where intrinsic excellence is wanting as well as extrinsic, where the drug or the medicine is manifestly defective in both, every committee of search passes censure, by a just report, standing upon record, to the shame and disgrace of the party convicted. The pains and penalties to be levied or inflicted, are left to the decision of a discreet body. That we hear so little of them is attributable to the nature of the subject and the great delicacy requisite in forming judgments upon it, most especially when we come to consider in the next place, the mutability of opinion in respect of the articles liable to be examined.

The glorious uncertainty of law is not more proverbial,

proverbial, than that, doctors differ. This difference is not so surprising in the practice of a science which is deemed somewhat obscure, as it is in regard to the opinion of simples which compose the *Materia Medica*.* To instance in that, which of all others completely rescues the profession from the obloquy frequently cast on it of its being a dark science; namely, the Jesuit's Bark, the good effects of which are as visible and manifest as any good effect of a manual operation in surgery, by its supreme virtue of counteracting putrefaction, and preventing the return of ague and intermitting fever.

We assert then, that even in this staple, this cardinal drug, such variations of opinion have of late years been promulgated, that nothing but the firm experience of age, and the test of long successful practice could restrain the torrent of reformation within its bounds. A few years ago, the Bark of St. Lucie was announced in a pamphlet which promised much, but it soon died a natural death, and is now forgotten. In the year 1760 a professional man would have lost his character, if the Red Bark had been

* *Kinkina*—en fievres intermittentes—Si le kinkina ne fut venu a notre secours, la fievre quatre ne seroit elle pas toujours l'opprobre de la medicine?—Le Clerc. 2 partic. l. 2. c. 6.

discovered in his shop. In about twenty years after, the same proscribed drug was publicly pamphleteered into the most efficacious of the species. This too sickened in its turn, when lo ! with pantomimical versatility, by the magic quill of the writer of the hour, the yellow succeeds the red and threatens to eclipse it, notwithstanding it is vouched from good authority that the medical College of Venice have protested against its use.*

These are disputes in which the vender has no part. He follows the mode, and whether it is more nauseous, whether blotches or blains are its effect, these are questions to be decided by the physicians themselves. All that is contended for is, that amidst such variety of opinion (even upon so sovereign an article as the Bark), the utmost tenderness and consideration is due from the persons appointed to be examiners, for it would serve a man little to have it acknowledged

* He that first invented printing, discovered the use of the compafs, or made public the virtue and right use of the kina kina, did more for the propagation of knowledge, for the supplying and increase of useful commodities, and saved more from the grave than those who built colleges, workhouses and hospitals.—Locke, Hum. Und. l. 4. c. 12. f. 12.

N. B. Red and yellow were not used in his days.

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that the disgrace he suffered by the censure of examiners in 1760 was wiped away in 1780, when his fortune was broken in the interval, and his character destroyed.

Having thus discussed a few observations on the subjects of examination, in respect to persons and things, and pointed out the difficulties springing from the mutability of opinion, a little notice is due to that adjunct to the medical examiners, the Warden of the Grocers, who is directed by the statute of Mary c. 9. to attend on all adjudications.

How it comes to pass, that a grocer should be called in to decide upon drugs. *

A clearer demonstration cannot well be given, that in the infancy of commerce the grocer (who is the dealer in spices to this day) comprehended under that generic term the whole species of spices, of which drugs constituted the larger part: which perfectly agrees with what has been before advanced under the head of antiquity. It is to be remarked that in the parent

* In London the apothecaries are one of the city companies, and were first incorporated with the grocers in the year 1606, James I.—Postlethwaite.

The apothecaries of Paris make but one corporation with the merchant grocers, which is the second of the six corporations of merchants.—Idem.

act of 32d Henry VIII. the Warden is there directed to be from the apothecaries ; thus, stating the terms in the statutes of those times reciprocally, denoting the apothecary or compounder, at one time, at another the grocer, the vender of spice, both united under the one generic character of grocer. In process of time, as population increased and commerce was encouraged, and as arts, manufactures, luxury and science, flourished with these their causes, the demands for the respective commodities of the grocer grew large and extensive, this led of course to an increase of numbers brought up to that occupation ; when these in turn came to settle for themselves, they naturally found some one branch or other sufficient to employ their capitals, and confining themselves to that particular branch pursued it with advantage and success. Thence followed the natural disjunction of the dealers in medicinal spices from the original grocers who in modern times confine themselves to those spices which are designed for confectionary and culinary purposes.

The medicinal spices were given up to the apothecary whose office it was to compound them and to the medicinal spice merchant who imported and collected them, and who now began to be distinguished by the appellation of druggist

gist and drug merchant, from the nature of the articles to which he confined his traffic. Not that he was unknown before, from the earliest antiquity he existed under the comprehensive term of spice merchant, but because he then found it worth his attention to prosecute the trade of medicinal spices separate from any other spices or articles whatever.

When tea was first introduced as a new article it was claimed by each ; the druggist, the grocer, and the apothecary, they all dealt more or less in it. The first was most eminent for its sale, but as in process of time the consumption grew to a wonderful extent, and the delicacy of the article ill-suited with the strong flavours of the drugs, it was gradually withdrawn from him, and now centres in the tea man (properly so called), and the modern grocer whose business attaches to domestic economy and consumption.

We may perceive here, the futility of the charge of insignificance brought against the modern druggists, in consequence of their not being incorporated as a company, when so many trades inferior in respectability obtained that privilege, because it is apparent, that their original fraternity the grocers was subsisting, and the new fraternity of apothecaries formed under James I. was open for any who chose to practise

tise as compounders or in detail ; and accordingly we see in the catalogues of each of these respectable companies at the present moment a number of names of eminent and worthy men exercising their professions in both capacities, as merchants, importers, retailers, and compounders.

How the author's prejudice could lead him so far astray as to delineate the druggists as more contemptible in the public eye than farriers, carmen, porters, and woodmongers, is truly astonishing, but—ex pede herculem.

The plea of necessity of reform, from the gross and fatal errors of ignorant men, some of which the author has enumerated, is specious. But the reader has to reflect, that ignorance is not a monopoly, every profession puts in its claim. Should a man in his reforming reverie attempt to purge any one of them from it, a drug more potent must be found than any the *Materia Medica* now contains.

Were we to pursue the authors example, instances without number might be adduced of errors, mistakes, and blunders on the other side. Misconstructions, misdirection, and mal-practice, have ever existed and must exist, while there are raw apprentices, ignorant journeymen, and careless masters in the world. It would gratify only an invidious curiosity to search into them. Suf-

fice it that an ordinary acquaintance with society will bring proofs enough to recollection. To such reformers therefore who will admit of nothing short of positive perfection, little can be said. Their business lies with another state and condition of life. On this terrestrial globe it never was, it never will be found without a preternatural cause. The degree of attainment towards it which man is capable of, demands the exercise of much christian charity to cover the defects which remain exposed.

Our general judgment therefore of all ranks and professions of men should be tempered with great forbearance, and many allowances.

In the particular occupations we are describing, this Catholic principle should be prominent; on which side soever the balance of ignorance and mal-practice inclines, the only caution the public can exercise to guard against their ill effects, is to confide in the most approved and best characters in each profession.

The wife will certainly desert the manifestly low and ignorant pretender. But the charms of empiricism too frequently fascinate the imagination, blind the eyes, kindle the passions, and warp the judgment of the best. No human law can ever restrain it.

The mountebank, the magnetiser, the water

doctor, the wise man of the village, or the old woman of the parish, these all will have a seductive influence, and not uncommonly enrol a numerous suite of devotees in their catalogue of patients. *

If the preceding remarks have had their force, the nature of the design of this new association will have in some measure developed itself. Disappointed that their applications through the mediums of the college and the company have not been attended to, they rally under this new title of the pharmaceutic association, and in the true spirit of reform boldly challenge the attention of the senate of the nation.

The presumption is fair, that if the grievances complained of could admit a proper remedy, these respectable legal bodies would have interferred; some causes have been assigned, and

* Le parti q'un homme de bon sens doit prendre par rapport à la médecine, c'est de se ne fier pas au premier venu, c'est de choisir, autant qu'il se peut, un medicin connu, et connu particulierement pour être homme de bien prudent, judicieux et pour avoir pratiqué long temps.

Jelaisse a part l'étude et le scavoir parce qu'un particulier qui n'est pas du métier, ne peut pas bien juger de ce q'un medicin qu'il veut choisir tient a cet égard et que ce n'est pas de ce coté là qu'il le doit regarder, de peur de se tromper et de prendre pour du savoir ce qui n'est quelquefois que du babil.—Le Clerc, p. 2. l. 2. c. 6.

others more weighty no doubt operate with them, which induce them to leave their redress to the public at large. Indeed it would ill become the apothecaries to attempt to crush these their brethren, who, in former times, were united with them under one head; though now in separation.

Let us then next examine more minutely the directions given by this self erected society, which they have circulated through the country.

The first will be thought modest, being no less than advising a claim, on the part of the apothecaries, for the sole vending of preparations, and compounding prescriptions. Is it possible the society should be serious in issuing such a requisition.

Chemistry has not as yet been adverted to. To shew however the absurdity of this proposal, it is necessary to turn the thoughts of the reader to that useful branch of science which attaches generally to the occupation of the druggist. Not one of them, scarcely, but has his regular laboratory: much of his time is spent in it. The mechanic, the manufacturer are indebted to him for many valuable improvements in their respective arts. The affinities of

bodies are thoroughly investigated by him. He can analyse and compound with accuracy, skill, and precision. Many most ingenious persons are to be found among them; none but partake of some experimental knowledge. Yet this description of men, whose usefulness the world bears witness to, are to be degraded and debarred from vending preparations and compounding prescriptions, when the principles and relative properties of their compositions are, perhaps, better understood by them than by many practising apothecaries.

How many, or rather, how few are there of the latter who are furnished with any elaborate whatever?

Their next recommendation, that apprentices should receive an approved education, is useless—inasmuch as it is now the received practice of the Apothecaries Company to examine the apprentice in the Latin tongue, when he is presented to be bound.

The third recommendation is, that assistants should not be engaged without examination.—These, it is known, must all pass a certain probation before they can be accepted upon public service. Surely, then, it lies as much upon the private employer to scrutinize into

the character of the assistant he takes into his service, as well in respect of ability, as regularity of conduct.

The fourth is, that persons should not settle without previous examination, and a service of fidelity for five years at least. To this is offered once more the received practice of the Apothecaries Company. The Court of Assistants require an open and approved examination when the party is made free, and further as to apprenticeship*, require a servitude of eight years. The importance of the charge was considered so great, that a man was not allowed to practise for himself so soon by one year as in ordinary trades. Pity it is these rules are not more universal, and the example of the Company more exactly followed.

The fifth recommendation of a competent court, consisting of a number of members of the new association, with powers to make bye-laws, seems to speak out, and unravel their whole design.

* In Paris, they who aspire to pharmacy, or the apothecary's trade, must serve four years as apprentices, and fix as journeymen, with some master or freeman; ten years in all: besides which they must be examined, and perform a masterpiece.—Postlethwayte, article Apprentice,

Superfluous is the recommendation, superfluous the association itself, since the powers they court subsist already in a legal corporate and respectable body, perfectly competent to the discharge of the duties incumbent on them.

The law has made a strong and marked distinction between the regular and irregular practitioner.

If the mala praxis can be brought home to the regular practitioner, an action of trespass lies against him; and, if proved to the satisfaction of the Jury, damages are given by them proportionate to the atrocity of the case. Here we are to observe the opinion the law forms of professional men in general, and the cure it prescribes for evils ensuing from ignorance, malice, or avarice. For again, should the mala praxis attach upon one that is not a regular, the criminal code is open for his punishment.—Thus, should a patient fall by his maltreatment, he may be indicted at law for manslaughter; and, if found guilty, must suffer the punishment due to that crime.

This leads us to understand and appreciate the merits of the appeal usually made to the responsibility of each; the tender interest and sympathy of the one, and the want of it in the other.

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The man who ventures to practise under the restriction of the penal law, will surely, for his own sake, proceed with a double guard of caution, in proportion as corporal punishment and disgrace is more to be dreaded than damages in an action upon the case. Further, it is natural to every man who takes upon him to prescribe, as well the apothecary, druggist, or any other person, to feel a strong interest in the recovery of his patient.

To suppose any man prescribing without the least care or regard for the person that consults him, or for the success of his remedy, is totally out of nature. Pride, self complacency, and all those darling prepossessions which render a man conceited of himself, concur to give him a strong bias of concern, interest and hope for the recovery of his patient. His reputation is advanced, his profit promoted by it.

An indirect charge of a serious nature has been brought forward by this champion of the new association against the retail druggists, founded on the grossest ignorance and perversion of judgment imaginable. It is insinuated, that being possessed of a larger stock of materials, and, in course, of many *indifferent articles, of the refuse, and offals of the good*, the retailer is thereby tempted to consume these, bad

materials, by vending them to his retail customers. The fallacy of this reasoning is obvious to any one who reflects ever so little upon the subject. To such as have experimental acquaintance with it, the insinuation is known to be both ridiculous and false.

To accumulate property by increase of business is the object of every good tradesman. This consideration alone is enough to shew the impolicy of vending bad materials. Men in business are not without sagacity sufficient to discover this. They therefore provide the best commodities as the best lures to custom. To the point in question—this rule is prevalent.

So far from a large stock proving a temptation to put off indifferent articles and offals, (as the author calls them) it gives the retailer, on the contrary, a strong advantage, which he converts to the benefit of the public, and his own; because he is thereby enabled to make a very choice selection of the best materials for his retail customers. It is well known, that these opportunities are not neglected by the most eminent retail druggists in London. Their general gains keep pace with their attention to this particular. Hence arises a security to the public, founded on interest, which binds the vendor to reserve the finest articles for their use.

Names of great celebrity are not wanting to justify these observations.

Had the apothecary equal advantage, it still would not turn to his interest to prosecute the retail branch of his business. He would find it interfere with his practice, and that these two were incompatible.

No prudent man would venture on retail without paying personal attention to it.

The temptations to pilfer in this trade are not so much before the counter as in many others ; but behind it they are, perhaps, more numerous and pressing from the difficulty of discovery.

The disburse by drachms and grains being minute, does not allow an opportunity of detecting a peculator by the means of deficiency in stock. Unremitted attention and vigilance are indispensable on the master's part, if he means to obtain affluence, or even competence.

This being the case, when can a professional man, in ordinary practice, find time to visit his patients ? One of the branches must suffer.

He therefore acts with most wisdom who gives up the less noble of the two ; and, quitting the ideas of retail, contents himself with the more honourable and more lucrative, in which he will have the satisfaction of seeing his

own prescriptions, and those of the physicians addressed to his care, made up correctly under his immediate direction.

Since then the law of the land (as far as it can be applied to the remedy of the evils complained of), is in full force, we find ourselves thereby removed from the necessity of further application to Parliament.

The powers of the College extend to fines, and destruction of unsound commodities; by the first of Mary they extended to imprisonment. The common law is moreover open to the public by civil action, or criminal prosecution, according to the nature of the case, and the description of the offenders.

In investigating, therefore, the design of the new society, we are led to conclude that it has its foundation more in self interest and vanity than in any real utility.

'Tis not sufficient that the physician has obtained his merited eminence by having travelled the appointed rout of preparatory education, and ultimate examination; that the powers which reside in him are ample; that they are exercised with becoming caution, moderation, and prudence—No—The language of the reforming apothecary to the physician is, *we have been ever used to practise in common with you;*
the

*the concerns of pharmacy** were universally entrusted to apothecaries ; therefore admit us your equals.

To the druggist he says—You are an usurper ; leave the retail counter ; and thus casting a double look on the apron and the diploma, at once betrays the character of ambition and avarice.

The edicts to prevent abuses are said by the author to be incompetent to check the knavery and ignorance of a multitude of medical practitioners. To this it may be answered, that the wisest human laws which could be framed, would ever be incompetent to this end. No statute of man will annihilate ignorance. The schools may check its growth and progress ; but there will ever be dunces as inmates. The miser may be restrained from offensive violence to his neighbour ; but no human edict will reach to soften the hard heart, or unclench the grasp of avarice.

These complaints are not of modern date : the legislators of ancient Rome provided their remedy by laws similar to our own.

* By a regulation of the 15th Oct. 1631, all the apothecaries in Paris are prohibited to give any medicine to patients, unless by the order and with the advice of a regular bred physician.—Postlethwayte, art. Apothecary.

Thus Montesquieu—" Les loix Romaines
 " vouloient que les medecins puissent étre punis
 " pour leur negligence ou pour leur imperitie.
 " Dans ces cas, elles condamnoient a deportation
 " le medecin d'une condition un peu relevè, &
 " à mort celui qui étoit d'une condition plus
 " basse."

Having endeavoured to shew the real design of this reforming system, and the little occasion there is to add to the coercive or restraining powers which already subsist for the regulation of medical men, of every denomination, a reflection or two may be permitted on the temper in which this production is written, and the means made use of by the author to advance his pretensions.

Referring to the introductory remarks on reform, we may intreat those who have read the work, to point out, if they can, any features of pure intention, disinterestedness, or decorum through the whole of it; on the other hand, we may fairly ask if detraction and self interest, coupled awkwardly with ambition, are not its characteristic marks. Pity an author, who possesses talent, should have recourse to such unworthy means, in order to introduce a system professedly founded on moral rectitude.

The absurdity of attempting, by a sort of family

family pride, to deduce consequence to the medical character from antiquity, has been made apparent, we trust, to all. The respectability of the profession must be placed on a more honourable basis.

In early times the *Επαφίαςης*, translated physician, was no other than an embalmer. Men of this sort were kept as servants in the retinue of the great. At the decease of any one of note in the family, they *επαφίασαι* prepared the body for sepulture. The corpse, according to the custom of Egypt, (as we are told) was impregnated with myrrh, cassia, and other drugs. The process is said to take up forty days; it was then pickled in nitre thirty days longer, afterwards wrapt in fine linen with gum to stick close like glue, and then delivered to the relations for sepulture, in the tomb of the fathers of the departed. These remains have been brought to us under the denomination of mummy.

Grotius, on St. Luke, observes likewise, that the practice of physic, in that apostle's time, was generally managed by persons of no higher rank than servants; that St. Luke, though born in Syria, is supposed to have been a servant at Rome, where he sometimes practised

physic, and, when made free, returned to his own country.

Montesquieu observes, “ A Rome s’ingeroit “ la medicine qui vouloit : ” but speaking of his own times, he adds—“ parmi nous les “ medicins sont obligés defaire des études & de “ prendre certains grades. Ils sont donc censés “ connoître leur art.”

Perhaps some exception may be taken from the terms *λατρός* and *πρωστηρός*; the former always rendered physician, and both employed where the consulting characters were of high rank, as in the case of King Asa and of Job.—(Chron. 16. 12. Job. 13. 6.) This is doubtful. Certain it is, the *Εὐταφιαστοί* were servants to Joseph, the prime minister of Egypt.

At any rate the apothecary is never intended. He is the *Μυρεὺς* of the Greeks, the *unguentarius* of the Latins; *Εὐταφιαστοί* was the funerator.

’Tis something singular that the first time we meet, in history, with the word physician, it should be under the character of an—undertaker.

The pedigree, therefore, claimed by the author, and denied to the drug merchant, should have been kept back. No rank, dignity, or consequence is to be derived from such an enquiry.

We must in consequence turn our views to some more noble base, on which to rest the goodly fabric of the medical profession in Great Britain at this day. If we survey the Continent, and examine the rank and respectability it bears in modern Europe, the prospect is unfavourable.

A moral writer of the times (Gisborne) in his chapter on the duties of physicians, has given an extract from Townsend's Tour through Spain, much to the purpose.

“ In point of honour” (says the traveller)
 “ no class of citizens meet with less respect
 “ than the physicians. The science and prac-
 “ tice are at the lowest ebb in Spain. The
 “ emoluments are proportionate, two-pence is
 “ a fee for a tradesman; ten-pence for a man
 “ of fashion.”

The same writer opens his subject thus: “ The medical profession enjoys, in Great Britain, that degree of estimation and credit, which a science, conferring on mankind the greatest of all comforts (except those of religion) justly deserves. Hence physicians in this country are almost invariably men of liberal education and cultivated minds.” He adds, “ Though this profession in England is rarely, if ever, pursued by young men of noble families,

" milies, it is by no means barren of honours and
 " attractions ; it opens the way to reputation
 " and wealth, and raises the physician to a level
 " (in the common intercourses of life) with
 " the highest classes of Society."

In France, the physician's fee was three livres, but for very eminent professors, six livres has of late been sometimes given. In Italy, about five shillings ; in Flanders, one guilder, under two shillings. The apothecaries, in all these countries, are accordingly, as must be supposed, in a very mean and low situation ; a medical chandler's shop is all they can boast, where Fuller's earth, essences, blacking-balls, and whiting, are promiscuously retailed. From Esculapius to Hippocrates, and from them to Celsus and Galen, down to Boerhave, there has been a succession of eminent physicians, ornaments of the age they lived in ; but the trade of the apothecary has, through that long current of time, been miserably degrading.*

Celsus is said to have prepared his own prescriptions ; and from thence it is argued, that

* Le Clerc says, the physicians, in the days of Celsus (retaining the ancient custom) employed *under them*, *Des gens qui donnoient des lavemens, appliquoient des Cataplames & des emplâtres, qui oignoient, qui fomentoient, qui baignoient, qui preparoient des medicamens, &c.*

he acted as an apothecary. The more natural suggestion is, that the reputation of the apothecary was at so low an ebb in his time, that he dare not trust them to make up his compositions. No man will dispute the eminence of Celsus ; his writings are celebrated in the medical schools to the present hour.

It is to be understood that we are all along speaking of the low estimation of the art of the apothecary as such. Many professors there may have been, and are, enlightened men, who may deserve a higher rank ; a Baumé, Maitre Apoticaire, à Paris, a Salvador of Spain, and other luminaries, who might challenge the ablest of the class. This, however, does not affect the general argument ; these are rare exceptions, and we are proud to notice them.

To resume then our subject ; if antiquity does not warrant respectability of character, if modern acceptation among the States of Europe does not contribute to it, where are we to look for the true base and foundation on which to rest this elevation of character in our own country ?

We refer, in answer, with generous exultation, to the constitution of the land we live in. That inestimable blessing, which has been the source of population, the fostering nurse of

commerce, under the benign influence of which industry has accumulated her piles of wealth, and infused the principles of temperance and œconomy; whence has arisen a strong substantial body of yeomanry, opening a rich and extensive field of practice for the apothecary, with promise of a liberal harvest.

From the days of Elizabeth, under whose encouragement trade flourished, "when the minds of men became enlightened by observation and travel, an inundation of wealth flowed in upon the merchants and *middle ranks*, an order of men not to be paralleled in any other nation, for affluence or numbers. On this class, this solid foundation, the apothecary of Great Britain builds his fame, his elevation, and consequence. He is stimulated by the flattering reception he meets with amongst this strong and respectable body, to deeper study, and a consequent improvement in practical information and knowledge.

In the middle ranks, the physician is rarely applied to, except in cases of danger. His employ lies chiefly among the higher orders, where he is received with suitable respect, distinction, and honour.

If therefore the apothecary has become, from these

these causes, a much higher character than in times past, let him support it.

It is not necessary to degrade the retail druggist, rather leave them in quiet possession of that lower branch of the profession which we have shewn to be incompatible with extensive practice out of doors. Let him rise as he ought to do, to higher attainments; never let him fly to the weak charge of encroachment, lest he involve himself in the accusation. For surely the druggist, who confines himself to the vending and compounding those spices and drugs, which appears to be his natural right, is little affected by it; rather the apothecary himself, who, at the present time, must be said to tread hard upon the heel of the physician: he it is, who, at one and the same time, compounds, visits, and prescribes. A retail druggist may, in an ordinary case, think himself competent to advise his customer to that which is proper for him. He may make up a prescription for a pauper, or for any one who chuses to confide in him; but the sublimer part of the profession he does not aspire to.

A view of modern practice will evince the justice of these remarks. The most eminent of the profession, as medical practitioners, disregard the

retail business, contented with preparing their own prescriptions, and those which physicians of repute direct to one or other of them.

The general excellence of our constitution not only raises the reputation and rank of the apothecary, in common with those of the manufacturer and commercial man, but it provides, by its wholesome regulations, such security for the public against knavery and deception in medical preparations and materials, as to afford the practitioner every advantage in the exercise of his profession.

The man of skill cannot be defeated by bad materials. The respectable Corporation of Apothecaries is a trading company, fortified by law, and endowed with various privileges.

Whether we consider the institution itself, or the persons selected on their Committees to transact the business of it, the utility of the design on one hand, or the discretion, probity, and knowledge in giving it effect on the other, we know not which to admire the most.

As to the institution itself, a more noble one could not have been devised. All petty interest sinks before it. "The general good is its ultimate effect. The ignorant may resort to it without fear of imposition, and the man of science

science feel no disappointment in his philosophical researches. The preparations he requires will not deceive him.

The navy of Great Britain, that great, that inestimable body of men ; these have the happiness to know that their supplies are derived from this institution. The lives and comforts of our seamen, as far as medicine can contribute to their preservation, are hereby insured. Whether simple or compound, every article of consumption passes under a strict review and examination, before it is delivered over to the practitioner. Excellence is the recommendation of each, and as far as perfection can be obtained, the consumer is certain of the benefit.

As to the Members selected to superintend the internal management, it is enough to say, that they are taken from the body at large, of high character and acknowledged ability ; that their attention to their duty is unremitting, and their whole conduct directed to the public service.

It is a pleasing reflection, that whilst probity and skill are held in veneration, there will be a constant succession of such characters to fill up from time to time the vacancies which fall ; and that therefore this Corporation, as a com-

ponent part of the great integral, the constitution of the country, will most probably live, while the constitution itself shall live, nor feel decay but when it declines.

Having now gone through the subjects proposed in the outset, by endeavouring to trace the art of the apothecary to its original source in history, it is hoped that every observation will have been considered as applying to the art itself in its infancy, the persons who practised it not coming under review (much less the modern apothecary) and that the enquiries into the antiquity of the druggist and drug merchant, will be looked upon as a defence set up against the attack which has been made upon them on that point; each party deserves a better defender.

That the writer of these remarks is not a professional man, will soon be discovered by one that is. However, if he succeeds so far as to place the respectable character of the modern apothecary on its true foundation, and is happy enough to illustrate the actual cause of it by reference to the excellence of the British Constitution, under which it has flourished more than in any other country whatever, his end, in a great measure, is answered; since the rank

the apothecary rises to, and the respect he obtains, under its benign influence, must weaken the force of complaint, and shew the impropriety of honouring, with the name of reform, any attempt to create a new institution, while the legal Corporation subsists with so much honour, and while the existing laws of the land apply as efficaciously, if acted upon, as the nature of the subject will admit.

F I N I S.

